



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jan. 9, 2023

Human Services Department announces the 988 crisis support line implemented resources to better serve LGBTQIA+ Youth

New Mexicans now have the option to press 3 after dialing 988 to connect to LGBTQIA+ affirming behavioral health professionals

SANTA FE — Today, The New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) announced it is working to help build awareness about the 988 crisis support line resources to meet the needs of New Mexico's LGBTQIA+ communities.

In late 2022, the 988 crisis support line integrated specialized, inclusive, emotional and crisis care support services to better serve the LGBTQIA+ community. The program is a pilot project of the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) supported by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association and in collaboration with [The Trevor Project](#), a suicide prevention group for LGBTQIA+ young people.

LGBTQIA+ youth who contact the 988 Lifeline via phone, text, or chat have the option of being connected with a specially trained, LGBTQIA-competent mental health peer by phone 24/7, and via text and chat during the hours of 5 p.m. to 4 a.m. MT daily.

“Linking those in need to compassionate and effective care by expanding access to affirming support for LGBTQIA+ youth is a key step in saving lives, decreasing stigma, rejection, trauma, victimization, microaggressions, homophobia and transphobia,” said **Neal Bowen, PhD.**, HSD’s Director of Behavioral Health Services. “In our early 988 community listening sessions, we heard loud and clear that LGBTQIA+ communities across New Mexico want to know they can trust and count on a safe and supportive crisis response to improve, not worsen the situation — Now they can.”

An estimated 85,388 New Mexico adults, or 5.2 percent of the population identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other, while 13,137 or 0.8 percent identify as transgender or gender non-conforming, according to data from the New Mexico Department of Health’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

Approximately 21,300, or 19.2 percent of High School youth in New Mexico identify as LGBTQIA+, according to a 2019 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey. Data also shows LGBTQIA+ youth are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide or engage in self-harm compared to their straight, cisgender peers. LGBTQIA+ adults are also at greater risk of suicide.

HSD encourages those in need of emotional support to call, text or chat 988. Since the inception of the crisis support line in July 2022, people reaching out for help via [chat](#) have been able to connect to a behavioral health professional in New Mexico 99 percent of the time, and those reaching out via text have been able to connect 100 percent of the time. 88 percent of the calls have been answered in state by New Mexico mental health peers.

If you or a loved one is experiencing feelings of hopelessness, mental or emotional distress, or need help finding local community services, call or text 988, the crisis support line.

The new yes.nm.gov site also features a [Get Help Now](#) page for New Mexicans to quickly access crisis support resources and find available behavioral health providers.

For 988 resources for the LGBTQIA+ communities, visit 988nm.org

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We talk, interpret and smile in all languages. We provide written information to our customers in both English and Spanish and interpretation services are available in 58 languages through our provider, [CTS Language Link](#). For our hearing, and speech impaired customers, we utilize [Relay New Mexico](#), a free 24-hour service that ensures equal communication access via the telephone to individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled.

The Human Services Department provides services and benefits to 1,088,981 New Mexicans through several programs including: the Medicaid Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Child Support Program, and several Behavioral Health Services.